

## The Command and Leadership Function of Martyr Soleimani in Fighting ISIS in Iraq

Esmail Ahmadi Moghadam<sup>1</sup>, Naser Poor Sadegh<sup>2</sup>, Mohsen Chizari<sup>3</sup>, Hasan Khalafi<sup>4</sup>

Receipt Date: 2024/01/02

Date of Acceptance: 2024/03/04

### Abstract

One of the most fundamental factors in the success of military and security organizations, especially during crises, is leadership. Martyr Soleimani was one of the successful national commanders at the Resistance Axis level who, through his leadership style and conduct, achieved numerous significant victories for the Resistance Axis and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The main objective of this research is to present "A Model of Jihadi Command and Leadership Based on Martyr Soleimani's Conduct in the Fight Against ISIS in Iraq." This research is applied-developmental in terms of type, and the research method is descriptive-analytical. The statistical population consisted of experts, specialists, and commanders of the Resistance Axis who had extensive and close collaboration with Martyr Soleimani and presence in the Resistance Axis. Library research methods were used to collect and complete the research literature and present the conceptual model, while field research and interviews were employed to gather information for the research model. After collecting and categorizing the interview texts, they were entered into Maxqda software version 2020 using thematic analysis. After determining the relevant propositions from the interview texts and referencing them, basic and primary themes were identified. Using Maxqda software version 2020, while identifying meaningful, significant, and relevant units, primary and basic themes were determined, comprising 370 basic themes. The primary themes were then organized into organizing themes, which numbered 11, and by categorizing the organizing themes according to the research topic, the overarching theme was determined. Based on the overarching theme (functional dimension and command duties), organizing themes (components), and basic themes (sub-components), the final research model was presented.

**Key words:** Model, Command Style, ISIS, Martyr Soleimani

---

<sup>1</sup> Faculty Member and professor at Supreme National Defense University.

<sup>2</sup> Faculty Member and professor at Supreme National Defense University.

<sup>3</sup> Faculty Member and professor at Imam Hussein (AS) Comprehensive University.

<sup>4</sup> PhD Graduate in Military Strategic Management, Supreme National Defense University.

Email: hassanehsai63@gmail.com

## Introduction

With the expansion of the Islamic Revolution's influence globally, particularly in West Asia, the front of global arrogance led by America initiated extensive proxy wars in the region to counter the revolution. This involved areas of Iranian influence in countries like Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen in a war with new characteristics, leading to the confrontation between the Resistance Axis, under the field command of Martyr Major General Haj Qasem Soleimani, and the dominance front and their proxy forces.

One of the success factors of the Resistance Axis in this arena was the command style and conduct. Martyr Soleimani, who had played an active role as a commander in various jihad scenes during the Sacred Defense period and afterward, and whose personality was shaped in the context of the Islamic Revolution, was chosen as the field commander. One of the most important and sensitive periods of his command was his field leadership of the Resistance Axis in the region and commanding the fight against ISIS in Iraq. Following the Supreme Leader's guidance and utilizing his command capabilities and the country's existing capabilities, he leveraged the existing capacity in the vast areas of the Resistance Axis in the region. With a jihadi approach rooted in Islamic and devotional thinking, he proceeded to command and lead the Resistance Axis in the fight against ISIS in Iraq.

Studying Martyr Soleimani's command and leadership conduct, which contributed to this victory alongside other influential factors, is of great importance and appears not to have been fully explained. Therefore, the researcher aims to identify, compile, and enumerate this style and conduct through interviews with those closest to Martyr Soleimani. The main issue is the lack of scientific documentation of his command conduct in the fight against ISIS in Iraq, which could help understand his command and leadership style as a command model in the Resistance Axis and its application in similar strategic and operational scenarios. Despite efforts made in this regard, a clear picture of his command and leadership conduct in this arena has not been presented yet. Therefore, this research seeks to answer the fundamental question: What is the jihadi command and leadership model based on Martyr Soleimani's style in the fight against ISIS in Iraq in terms of functional dimension and command duties?

## **Theoretical Foundation: Literature Review**

Through a comprehensive examination of existing works related to Martyr Soleimani's jihadi conduct and other commanders, including doctoral dissertations, related research projects, and articles published in domestic and international scientific conferences and journals, several commonalities were identified. These commonalities led to cognitive synergy and utilization of their achievements for the present research. Specifically, one of the most significant cognitive achievements of previous research has been the focus on the concept of jihadi management and leadership style, which researchers addressed from various perspectives according to their research conditions and subjects.

Another aspect addressed in these studies was Martyr Soleimani's personality, characteristics, management, and leadership, which enriches the present research. The military environment and armed forces context of these studies provides valuable insights. The conducted research contains substantial practical information regarding command and management in the armed forces, specifically related to the research topic.

While related research has made efforts to understand the concerns of the present study, due to limited access to other researchers' authoritative sources, we need to examine, explain, and update certain data and scientific analyses in this field. Notably, Martyr Soleimani's leadership conduct in fighting ISIS in Iraq remains an unexplored topic in the reviewed literature.

A research project titled “The School of Martyr Soleimani: A Model for Training Civilization-Building Jihadi Managers” was conducted in 2020 under the supervision of Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Hassani Ahangar, Commander of Imam Hussein Comprehensive University (PBUH), and Ruhollah Tavalaei, Commander of the Faculty and Research Institute of Management. The project aimed to explain the School of Martyr Soleimani to extract a model for civilization-building jihadi managers and extend it across the dimensions of the Second Step of the Islamic Revolution Statement, while also establishing discourse around the School of Martyr Soleimani at the levels of armed forces, national, and international spheres. The project yielded several publications including 'Zekr-e-Soleiman' (collection of narrative research articles by those close to Martyr Soleimani), 'Notgh-e-

Soleiman' (collection of categorized speeches by Martyr Soleimani), 'Sincere Leaders' (compilation of management indicators from the School of Martyr Soleimani), 'Case Study of the Master Martyr of Resistance' (four narratives about Martyr Haj Qasem Soleimani), 'Conqueror of Hearts' (contrasting the School of Martyr Soleimani with the domination system), 'The Theory of Revolutionary System in the Intellectual Framework of Imam Khamenei', conference abstract proceedings, a website and multimedia database software about Martyr Soleimani, and over 315 articles resulting from this conference. (Ahangar & Tavalaei, 2020)"

- 1) A doctoral dissertation titled “Presenting a Command and Management Model for Armed Forces Through Compiling the Experiences of the I.R.I. System Based on the Velayat-e-Faqih Discourse and Constitution” was completed at the Supreme National Defense University and Strategic Studies Research Institute, Faculty of National Defense, by Mohammad Ahadi under the supervision of Dr. Seyyed Abdolrahim Mousavi and Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Reza Shams Dolatabadi in 2016. According to the research findings, spirituality-centeredness constitutes the main proposition in the command and management model of I.R.I.'s armed forces, distinguishing it from other countries' models. The central point in this model is 'being doctrinal and the centrality of faith and spirituality, sacrifice, and martyrdom-seeking' for 'preserving the system and revolution and maintaining territorial integrity.' 'Powerful management and leadership, decisiveness and authority, order and discipline and lawfulness, justice-orientation, knowledge and insight' form the discourse articulation and represent the most important categories in their ranking. (Mousavi, Dolatabadi & Ahadi, 2016)"
- 2) The article “Analysis of Martyr General Haj Qasem Soleimani's Leadership Style: A Transcendent Model of Servant Leadership” aims to analyze Martyr Qasem Soleimani's leadership style as one of the transcendent types of leadership styles. With the objective of delineating the leadership components of this commander, the study examines library resources including biography, speeches,

notes, and the martyr's will, attempting to comprehensively compare Martyr Soleimani's leadership style components with the servant leadership style."

- 3) The article "Strategic Principles Governing the Soleimani School" was written based on the Supreme Leader's statements regarding the explanation of Martyr Soleimani's school of thought and its governing strategic principles. The analysis method is jurisprudential induction or content analysis, with the statistical population comprising the will and speeches of Martyr Major General Haj Qasem Soleimani, the Supreme Leader's statements, and speeches by the martyr's fellow combatants. In this research, the answer to the main question regarding the governing principles of Martyr Soleimani's school is summarized in four principles: 1- Ideological or epistemic principles, 2- Value principles, 3- Pattern or methodological principles, 4- Symbolic or dispositional principles. (Babaei, 2020)
- 4) The article "Examining Martyr Soleimani's Style in Securing Resistance Resources" studies his approach to resource procurement while examining some of his actions in cultural, military, economic, and political spheres. According to the research findings, Martyr Soleimani employed the following methods for resource procurement: - Utilizing the country's general budget and other military and revolutionary ranks, - Using resistance governments' public budgets, - Leveraging domestic and international public donations, - Using religious funds and endowments, - Utilizing revenues from domestic and international investments, - Economic empowerment of resistance cores and governments. (Langari et al., 2020)
- 5) Although previous research partially fulfills the current study's needs, developing a scientific work within the framework of the present research was necessary to address its main issues and concerns. Consequently, this research fundamentally differs from

related precedents in terms of its main subject and key variables. Additionally, regarding the level of analysis, this research focuses on the resistance axis and particularly Martyr Soleimani's command and leadership approach in fighting ISIS in Iraq, creating a significant distinction from other related studies. Another major difference between this research and previous studies is its unique contribution in using reliable and documented data, attributed to the researcher's experience with the research subject.

**Command:** According to Article 8 of the Armed Forces Disciplinary Code, command refers to the authority that an individual in service possesses by virtue of their job, rank, and responsibility in pursuit of their assigned mission (Armed Forces Disciplinary Code, 1990:14). From the Supreme Leader's perspective, "command is a spiritual matter, a type of leadership, a comprehensive form of administration, and something reliant on mind, emotion, action, body, and spirit, combined with proper organizational structure and form, where the essence of command is leadership." (Supreme Leader, January 12, 1991)

## **Conceptology**

### **Command and Leadership Style**

A person's leadership style is the behavioral pattern that one displays when attempting to influence others' activities, as perceived by others. Leadership style is sometimes equated with the leader's personality and is considered as others' interpretation of the leader's relatively stable behaviors. (Rezaeian, 2004:188)

**ISIS:** ISIS is a media term composed of acronyms naming a Salafi (Takfiri-Jihadi) group led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, which, under the name Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, controlled parts of Iraq, Syria, and other countries for several consecutive years. (Keykhairad, 2016:4)

**Model:** A model is a simple expression of a real phenomenon and, in relation to understanding systems, it is an image or representation of a system that allows the system and relationships between its components to be examined abstractly. (Checkland, 1989:11)

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Service Background of Martyr Soleimani**

Qasem Soleimani, son of Hassan and Fatema Soleimani, was born in 1958 in Qanat Malek village in Raber County. In 1977, he began working contractually at Kerman Water Organization. He actively participated in nearly all revolutionary events and their aftermath. Soleimani officially joined the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in 1980. In late 1980, he was deployed to Tehran and completed specialized command training under Martyr Commander Mohammad Nazeri at Imam Ali (PBUH) Garrison.

The Operation Tariq al-Quds marked the beginning of Qasem Soleimani's acquaintance with Martyr Hassan Bagheri. This blessed connection led to Soleimani being assigned responsibility for a front line called Thar Allah in the Shush front by Hassan Bagheri (on October 13, 1981). He was appointed as Brigade Commander on December 12, 1981, and a year later, was promoted to Division Commander.

Soleimani's mission as commander of the 41st Thar Allah Division in the southern fronts continued until 1990, two years after accepting the ceasefire. Simultaneously, he was appointed as IRGC Commander of Region Seven (October 13, 1988) and then as Commander of Quds Headquarters (December 12, 1989), which was established to counter armed insurgents.

On February 4, 1998, the Supreme Leader appointed Haj Qasem Soleimani as commander of the IRGC Quds Force. Notable periods of his command before ISIS's emergence include: managing the martyrdom incident of nine Iranian diplomats by Taliban extremists on February 6, 1999; the Israeli regime's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in June 2000; the September 11, 2001 attacks and subsequent occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 by America and its allies, where Soleimani worked to increase the cost of their regional presence; the 33-day war and Hezbollah's victory in 2006; the Israeli regime's defeat in the 22-day war against defenseless people of Gaza (December 2008); and assistance in managing the Syrian crisis that began in 2011.

ISIS, exploiting the crisis in Syria and existing conditions in Iraq, along with support from regional and international backers, managed to occupy Mosul in a short period and gain control over more than one-third of Iraq's territory, seriously threatening the country's vital centers. ISIS's presence in Iraq and their anti-Shiite and anti-Iranian rhetoric posed a major threat to both Iranian and Iraqi national security. General Soleimani utilized the full capacity of the resistance axis in Iraq while coordinating various political, military, and security dimensions within the Islamic Republic of Iran to combat ISIS in Iraq.

In his final mission, on Tuesday, January 1, 2020, he left Iran for Syria. On Wednesday, he held a meeting with Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah. On Thursday, after completing final coordination with field commanders in Syria, he departed for Iraq in response to the Iraqi Prime Minister's official invitation to meet with several Iraqi officials. After arriving in Iraq and receiving an official welcome, he was en route to his accommodation when at 1:20 AM on January 3, 2020, an American aircraft, under direct orders from U.S. President Donald Trump, conducted a terrorist operation targeting the vehicle carrying Haj Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Quds Force, and his companions. This cowardly attack resulted in the martyrdom of Soleimani along with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, Commander Hussein Pourjafari, Shahrouz Mozaffarinia, Hadi Taremi, Vahid Zamanian, and several other Iraqi resistance forces (Interview with Abolhasani, Tehran: 2022).

## **The Formation of ISIS in Iraq and Confronting It**

### **Political Situation**

"The new era in Iraq began in 2003 with the American occupation. While the U.S. military operation to overthrow the Baathist regime was swift and successful, their efforts to establish their desired system and organize the new Iraq failed, as Iraq's internal political forces, supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran, envisioned a different future for Iraq.

In the political process of the new Iraq, during the constitution's drafting and approval, parliamentary elections, and government formation, Shiite parties close to Iran succeeded in establishing a Shiite-centered



governmental system. However, this system was participatory, including quotas for Sunnis and Kurds. Nevertheless, some radical Sunni factions engaged in illegal and terrorist activities to overthrow this government. Kurdish parties fueled Shiite-Sunni conflicts, while America and regional players like Turkey and Saudi Arabia worked to counter Iran's influence and reduce the Shiite role in government.

The 2010 elections marked the peak of multi-layered competition within Shiite parties and between them and their Sunni and secular rivals, with obvious foreign intervention led by America, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. Pre-election Shiite division led to the victory of the Western and regional Sunni-backed 'Al-Iraqiya Coalition' led by Ayad Allawi. However, timely post-election Shiite unity made them the largest parliamentary faction, enabling them to retain the prime minister position. Nevertheless, legal complexities and the consensual system based on party quotas extended the prime minister selection process to nine months.

After the U.S. withdrawal in December 2011 and their reduced direct role, Iraq's political crises peaked. In late 2012, shortly after the Islamic Awakening, the Sunni conflict with the central government and Shiites expanded from political parties and terrorist groups to street level across Sunni provinces. These protests, continuing through 2013, initially focused on economic and limited political demands but were later co-opted by Baathists, Takfiri groups, and ISIS, transforming into a general uprising against the ruling system. Demands shifted to constitutional change and Baathist reinstatement. The protests evolved from political demonstration to armed resistance, with ISIS forces emerging among protesters in Ramadi. This ultimately led to ISIS's overt military presence and capture of Fallujah and parts of Jurf al-Sakhar, marking the beginning of ISIS's territorial control in Iraq, followed by Mosul's fall six months later. (Nikmanesh, 2020: 19-24).

### **Security Situation**

Following Iraq's occupation in 2003, all Iraqi security institutions were dissolved, creating favorable conditions for terrorist organizations to emerge and expand. Al-Qaeda members entered Iraq from abroad, while Baath Party survivors formed new organizations, mostly with Islamic

names, launching armed insurgencies against Iraq's new political process, effectively initiating Sunni-Shiite conflicts.

The new Iraqi army and police were established through U.S. selection, training, organization, and equipment. The Americans created "Awakening Councils" (Majalis al-Sahwa) by negotiating with Baathists and Sunni groups, combining them with tribal forces to counter Al-Qaeda, achieving significant success particularly in Anbar province. After the U.S. withdrawal in 2011, these forces lost Iraqi government support, with only some integrating into the police while others were disbanded.

By 2011, Iraq maintained 930,000 official armed forces. Despite the substantial size of Iraq's police and army and five counter-terrorism intelligence agencies, Al-Qaeda in Iraq (later renamed "Islamic State of Iraq") increased activities after the U.S. withdrawal in 2012, leading to escalated terrorist incidents.

After radical Sunni protests persisted for over a year, Nouri al-Maliki's government moved to end them by removing protest camps in Ramadi. ISIS seized this opportunity to launch extensive military operations, capturing Fallujah and parts of Anbar province in late 2013, marking the beginning of their territorial control. Following Fallujah's fall, Iraqi forces conducted numerous operations over six months until Mosul's fall, but ISIS's presence in Anbar province became entrenched. During the six months before Mosul's fall, coinciding with Maliki's government's final period, the critical security situation and its dangerous trajectory for Iraq became increasingly evident. (ibid: 24-29)

Eventually, with the design and support of Americans and several regional and extra-regional countries, and considering the emergence of various factors such as: the presence of a significant number of extremist Takfiri forces in the region and Iraq, a sense of void among a considerable portion of Sunnis regarding the absence of governance in the form of Islamic caliphate, inefficiency of Iraq's defense, security and intelligence systems, extensive activities of Baathists, cooperation of some tribal sheikhs with Takfiris, and the existence of various other internal conditions in Iraq led to the emergence, influence, and expansion of ISIS and its dominance over vast areas of this country. In minimal time, they managed

to gain control over more than one-third of Iraq and capture important cities such as Mosul, Tal Afar, Baiji, Fallujah, Tikrit, and others, reaching the gates of Baghdad, Iraq's sensitive and vital centers, and the borders of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

### **Confronting ISIS in Iraq**

The main objective of creating ISIS in Iraq was to strike and weaken the Islamic Republic of Iran. Many American officials have referenced this matter. The formation and expansion of ISIS had both internal and external causes. The internal reason was the existence of extremist thinking among some radical Salafi Muslims, frustration and sense of defeat among certain personalities, groups, and parties, such as the defeated Iraqi Baath Party. The external reason was the exploitation by imperialistic regimes like America to advance their malicious policies in the region to counter the Islamic system, create security for the Zionist regime, pave the way for establishing a new Middle East, and create religious conflicts and wars between Muslims to weaken the power of the Islamic world.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, understanding the importance of this matter, took timely action and, under the field command of Martyr Major General Haj Qasem Soleimani and with massive participation of Iraqi people and faithful militants, effectively confronted this puppet group of imperialism and reaction. Early notification and warning to the Iraqi government before ISIS's extensive entry, initial measures to preserve vital centers in the early stages of ISIS expansion, conducting initial operations to stop ISIS's advance, helping organize and train volunteer popular forces, equipping and deploying Hashd al-Shaabi forces, assisting the Iraqi army in various areas, active participation in designing major operations, and providing advisory actions in various specialties were among Iran's measures in fighting ISIS in Iraq (Interview with Chizari, Tehran, 2022).

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, in the form of advisory groups commanded by Martyr Soleimani, from the first days organized resistance groups and provided comprehensive training, armament and equipment support by land and air. They established positions along ISIS's advancement axes, prioritizing preventing ISIS from accessing Baghdad's government center, freeing the holy shrines of infallible Imams including Samarra from siege, preventing massacres in besieged areas, and preventing ISIS's expansion toward Iran's borders.

Following Grand Ayatollah Sistani's fatwa, Iraqi people from all classes and professions headed to the fronts. Resistance groups formed and organized since the Sacred Defense era, like the Badr Organization, and after the 1991 uprising, like Kata'ib Hezbollah, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, and others, became suitable vessels through the IRGC Quds Force for absorbing and organizing this vast volume of volunteer forces. These forces received intensive training in centers near Iran's borders and were deployed in defense, stabilization, and containment of ISIS (Operation Derectoriate of Quds Force, 2018).

Generally, the operations conducted by resistance forces in Iraq can be categorized into three types: stabilization operations, localized operations, and major operations, as detailed below:

### **Defense and Halting ISIS Advancement**

This category of operations was conducted to repel ISIS threats and stop their advancement. Most of these operations were planned and executed along the axes of Baghdad, Babel, Salah al-Din, and Diyala.

### **Localized and Limited Operations**

After stopping ISIS's offensive wave and preventing their advancement and expansion of occupied territories, the Hashd al-Shaabi, with assistance from IRGC advisory groups and Lebanese Hezbollah, proceeded to design and execute limited and small-scale operations. These types of operations were conducted on a small scale to clear certain areas of ISIS occupation. It's worth noting that some of these operations served as a second phase to consolidate defensive positions.

### **Major Operations**

These types of operations were planned and executed on a large scale with the participation of all resistance groups, sometimes including units from the Iraqi army and police within Hashd al-Shaabi's combat organization, to liberate and reclaim extensive territories from ISIS occupation and return them to central government control. The role of Iranian advisory groups, especially the field presence and command of Martyr Major General Haj Qasem Soleimani, was decisive in overseeing and managing operational scenes from planning stages to distributing operational responsibilities among acting units and guiding units until

achieving operational objectives and complete enemy defeat in operational axes. The major operations included 32 operations as follows:

Dejail-Samra road liberation operation, Amerli and Kirkuk road liberation operation, Zargah bridge liberation operation, Jarf al-Nasr liberation operation, Saadiyah and Jalola liberation operation, Balad and Zaluaiya liberation operation, Moqdadiya liberation operation, East Tigris liberation operation, Tikrit liberation operation, Operation to liberate West Tigris, Operation to liberate Sarsar, Operation to liberate Biji, Operation to liberate Saqlawieh, Operation to liberate Beji, Operation to liberate Beji, Operation to liberate Samarra Island, Operation to liberate Fallujah, Operation to liberate Khaldiya Island, Operation to liberate Strategi and Adayeh road, Operation to liberate Tal Afar Airport , Operation for the liberation of Tal Abta, Operation for the liberation of Ashweh, Operation for the liberation of Al-Hadhar, Operation for the liberation of Baaj and Qairwan, Operation for the liberation of Mabar al-Walid, Operation for the liberation of Tal Afar, Operation for the liberation of Akashat, Operation for the liberation of Hawijah, Operation for the liberation of Kirkuk, Operation for the liberation of Qaim, Operation for the clearing of the Sahara, Operation clearing the desert (Derectoriate of Naqsa Operations, 2017).

### **The Style and Conduct of Command and Leadership**

Martyr Professor Motahhari explains the concept of "Sirah" (conduct/method) as follows: "Sayr means movement, going, walking. 'Sirah' means the type of walking. Sirah follows the Arabic grammatical pattern of 'Fi'lah' which in Arabic indicates type/style. For example: 'Jalasa' means to sit, and 'Jilsah' means the style and type of sitting - this is a precise point. 'Sayr' means going or behavior, but 'Sirah' means the type and style of behavior. What's important is understanding the Prophet's style of behavior. Those who have written 'Sirah' have written about the Prophet's actions. The books we have titled 'Sirah' are actually 'Sayr', not 'Sirah'. For instance, Sirah Halabiyah is 'Sayr', not 'Sirah'; its name is Sirah, but in reality it is Sayr. It documents the Prophet's actions, not the Prophet's style in actions; not the Prophet's method of behavior, not the Prophet's methodology (Motahhari, 2009).

One of the crucial aspects of military organizations is the matter of command and its management. Undoubtedly, the development and progress of any military organization or unit is largely indebted to the

successes achieved by its commander. Command possesses strategic characteristics, and leadership forms the essence of command (Abolhasani et al., 2019: 179-180). There are various perspectives on leadership, and management science scholars have presented different views about it, resulting in various approaches to leadership. "According to experts, there are three main approaches to leadership, and different leadership styles have been developed based on and in accordance with these approaches. These three approaches are: 1- Leadership traits and characteristics approach 2- Leadership behavior approach 3- Situational or leadership position approach" (Bakhtiari, 2019: 33).

In addition to the aforementioned styles, the Jihadi Management style, which has been continuously explained by the Supreme Leader in recent decades, is a concept born from the Islamic Revolution and developed within the framework and process of establishing the Islamic system based on pure Islam and the theory derived from Velayat-e-Faqih. "Jihadi Management is a precious legacy from the era of defense and epic, where the preparation and equipping of human and material resources, activity planning, and implementation of actions all took place in an environment derived from authentic religious teachings. Its most important characteristic was the dissolution of human will into divine will, symbolized by conscious obedience to the Vali-e-Amr or the Vali-e-Faqih of the time. Therefore, reason and love are key components of Jihadi Management. In other words, Jihadi Management conducts affairs using scientific and technological tools, aligned with divine will and based on divine planning. The victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution, experiences from the Sacred Defense era, rural development, hundreds of other scientific and practical achievements across the country, and even Hezbollah's victory against the heavily armed Zionist regime in Lebanon all demonstrate the effectiveness of Jihadi Management in heavy and complex arenas." (Hazaveh, 2014: 41-42)

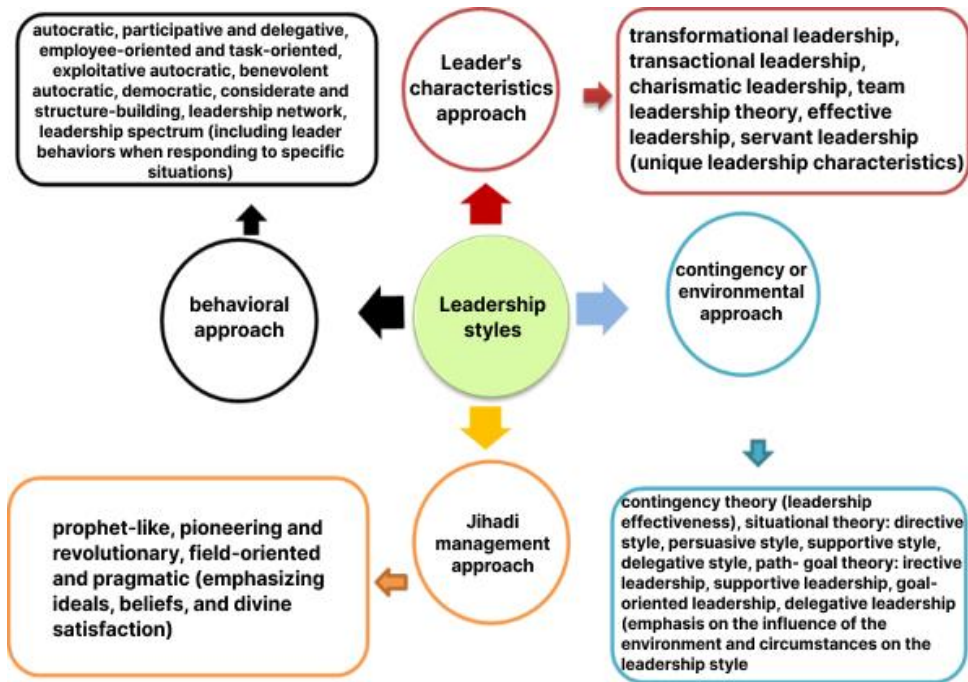


Figure 1: The Main Approaches to Leadership Style

In a research conducted at the Imam Center of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the dimensions and areas of command and management style in the IRGC have been outlined. These include the relatively stable behavior of commanders in relation to target groups (commanders and managers, subordinate personnel, peer colleagues, and superiors), environmental dimension (operational environment and general environment), and task dimension (commanders and managers, goal setting, planning and programming, organizing, resource provision, coordination, and monitoring and control). (Group of Authors, 42:2015). The conceptual model of the research, based on the conducted studies, is expressed as follows:



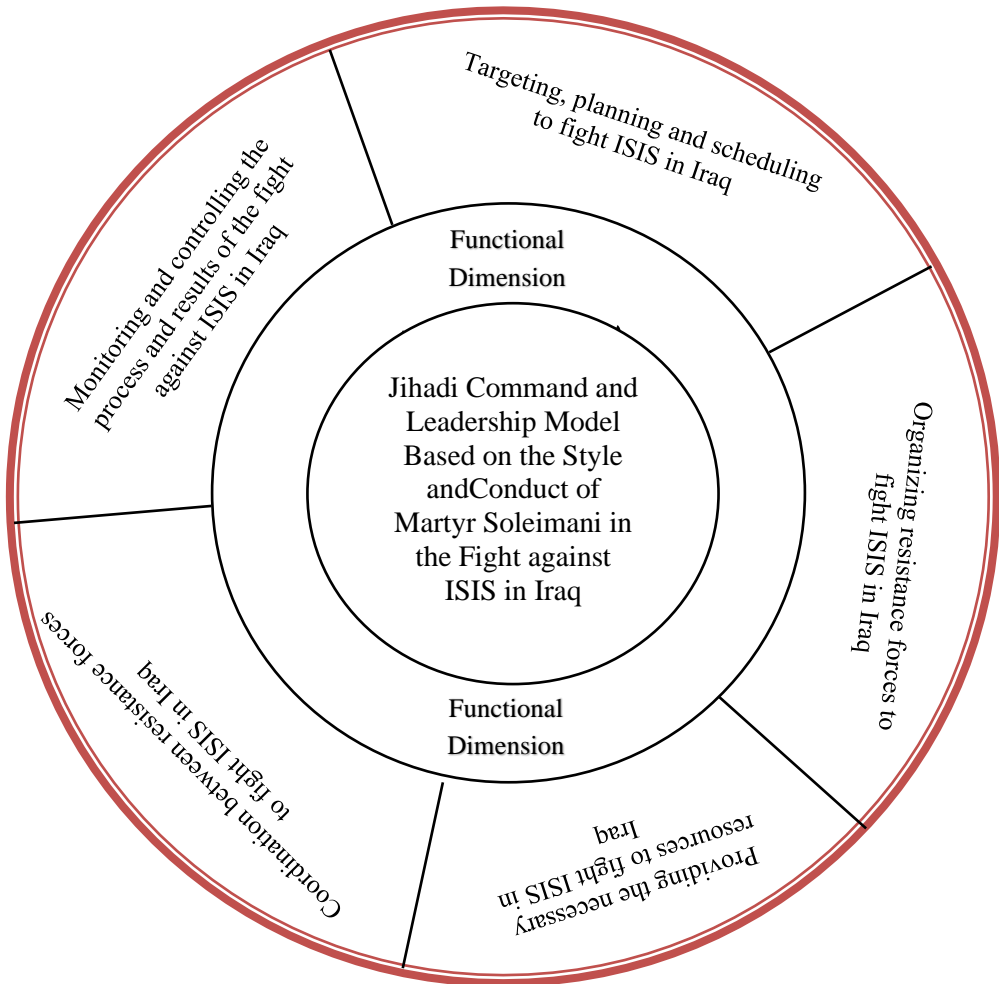


Figure 2: Conceptual Model of the Research

## Research Methodology

This research is an applied-developmental study. It is applied because it examines Martyr Soleimani's command and leadership style in the fight against ISIS in Iraq, provides a model for it, and utilizes research results in the modeling process. It is considered developmental as it contributes to expanding the literature, concepts, and topics related to the resistance axis.

This research employs a descriptive-analytical method to explore the subject's constructs, including dimensions, components, and indicators.



Data collection was conducted through interviews and speeches of individuals related to the research topic. To understand and comprehend individuals' experiences and their interpretations regarding his command style, expert opinions and specialists' views in this field were utilized. In this research, thematic analysis was used to determine the relationships between variables (dimensions, components, and indicators). Finally, a jihadi command and leadership model based on Martyr Soleimani's approach in fighting ISIS in Iraq was presented in the functional dimension.

The subject scope of this research falls within the field of command and management sciences. The geographical scope includes Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the temporal scope covers developments from the emergence of ISIS in 2013 until Martyr Soleimani's martyrdom on January 3, 2020.

The statistical population of the study comprises resistance axis commanders, senior Iranian and Iraqi military commanders, political officials, and prominent scholars involved in the fight against ISIS in Iraq who have experience with Martyr Soleimani, the resistance axis, and the anti-ISIS campaign in Iraq. To achieve the research objectives, a purposive sampling method was employed, and interviews continued until theoretical saturation was reached regarding the research topic. Data collection utilized both documentary/library research methods and field research approaches. In this study, thematic analysis was used to find appropriate answers to the research questions.

### **Data Analysis and Research Findings**

To develop the research model, a collection of data was gathered through interviews with Martyr Soleimani's deputies in the Quds Force and in the fight against ISIS, commanders of Iraqi resistance groups and Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), Islamic Republic of Iran's political officials in Iraq during the anti-ISIS campaign, as well as statements made by resistance axis officials in various countries and relevant commanders and officials within the country. These were extracted and categorized using thematic analysis. Then, analytical propositions were extracted and formulated based on comprehensive understanding of the existing data through researcher interviews with data sources and repeated study of texts.

After formulating and categorizing the propositions, using MAXQDA software, basic themes were determined in similar and coherent groups with references to sources. After identifying basic themes from propositions and categorizing them into 370 themes, organizing themes, which reached 11 in number, were identified. By categorizing the organizing themes according to the research topic, the overarching theme was determined to be Martyr Soleimani's behavior and performance in carrying out command duties in the fight against ISIS in Iraq.

In fact, the combination of basic themes, organizing themes, and the overarching theme comprises the main framework of the jihadi command and management model based on Martyr Soleimani's approach in fighting ISIS in Iraq. This framework was collected and compiled based on reliable and authentic data through interviews with individuals closest to Martyr Soleimani who were present in the fight against ISIS in Iraq or were connected to this matter in some way. These themes were identified and determined using thematic analysis and MAXQDA 2020 software.

The overarching theme along with the organizing themes are presented as follows:

Table 1: Functional Dimension Components

Overarching Theme	NO.	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
<b>Functionality and Duties</b>	1	Design and Planning	57
	2	Organization	23
	3	Support and Mobilization of Resources	25
	4	Training	34
	5	Coordination	14
	6	Guidance and Command	50
	7	Monitoring and Follow-up	49
	8	Decision-making	42
	9	Military Consultancy	12
	10	Diplomacy	19
	11	Intelligence and Operation	45
		Total	370

Table 2: Jihadi command and leadership model based on the style of Martyr Soleimani in the fight against ISIS in Iraq in the functional dimension

Dimension	Components	Indicators
The type of relatively stable behavior of Martyr Soleimani in the functional dimension	Design and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Predicting ISIS attacks on Iraq</li> <li>➤ Infrastructure-building performance</li> <li>➤ Architecting resistance with insight</li> <li>➤ Strategic outlook for the future of resistance in Iraq</li> <li>➤ Creating synergy in resistance</li> <li>➤ Accurate assessment of friendly forces before operations</li> <li>➤ Conducting staff consultation meetings before operations</li> <li>➤ Reviewing plans and maps before operations</li> <li>➤ Successful planning of most operations</li> <li>➤ Decisive decision-making in planning</li> <li>➤ Identifying the focal point of crisis</li> <li>➤ Focus on objectives</li> </ul>
	Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Purposeful creation of structure and organization</li> <li>➤ Formation of organization based on resistance to counter ISIS</li> <li>➤ Appropriate revolutionary organizational structuring in Iraq</li> <li>➤ Organization tailored to enemy conditions and environment</li> </ul>
	Support and Mobilization of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Optimal planning for human and financial resources</li> <li>➤ Utilization of all available resources</li> <li>➤ Securing resources for fighting ISIS in Iraq through various channels</li> <li>➤ Transfer of weapons and equipment through multiple routes</li> <li>➤ Timely equipping of Iraqi military and popular forces</li> <li>➤ Appropriate utilization of weapons and equipment</li> </ul>
	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establishing cadre and training centers for resistance in Iraq</li> <li>➤ Special training for select resistance groups</li> <li>➤ Rapid implementation of training courses for Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)</li> <li>➤ Specialized training of PMF forces in national training centers</li> <li>➤ Field training of PMF forces</li> <li>➤ Utilizing resistance axis capacity to train Iraqi resistance forces</li> <li>➤ Supervision, follow-up, and oversight of commanders' development</li> <li>➤ Human capital management based on Islamic principles</li> <li>➤ Gradual development of personnel in the field</li> <li>➤ Comprehensive approach to resistance cadre development</li> </ul>
	Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Creating coordination between Iraqi groups</li> <li>➤ Coordination among institutions and officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran</li> <li>➤ Coordination between resistance forces and the Iraqi government</li> <li>➤ Establishing interaction at all mission levels</li> </ul>
	Guidance and Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Spiritual command and guidance</li> <li>➤ Persuasive guidance</li> <li>➤ Comprehensive command and direction of operations</li> <li>➤ Indirect battle command style</li> <li>➤ Technological command</li> <li>➤ Preventing enemy stabilization and denying them time</li> <li>➤ Power-based operation guidance</li> <li>➤ Application of soft power</li> </ul>
	Monitoring and Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Control of commanders through revolutionary and unit forces</li> <li>➤ Supervision and control through field presence</li> <li>➤ Continuous and permanent evaluation of managers and commanders</li> <li>➤ Supervision and control from command and control center</li> <li>➤ Maximum encouragement and minimum punishment</li> <li>➤ Follow-up in various conditions without conventional structure</li> <li>➤ Continuous follow-up after orders until achieving results</li> <li>➤ Continuous follow-up on martyrs' families' welfare</li> <li>➤ Personal follow-up on special cases</li> </ul>

	Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Collective consensus-based decision making</li> <li>➤ Decisions based on religious knowledge</li> <li>➤ Timely decision making</li> <li>➤ Decision making with complete confidence</li> <li>➤ Quick and decisive decisions</li> <li>➤ Effective decision making in crisis situations</li> <li>➤ Strategic perspective in decision making</li> <li>➤ Correction of incorrect decisions</li> </ul>
	Military Consultancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assigning advisors alongside Popular Mobilization Forces commanders</li> <li>➤ Serving as trustworthy and competent advisor to Iraqi officials</li> <li>➤ Strong performance in advisory roles</li> <li>➤ Full-scale military advisory presence in Iraq</li> </ul>
	Diplomacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Axis of unity for aligned Iraqi parties</li> <li>➤ Creating consensus at the political level</li> <li>➤ Synergistic attention to both field operations and diplomacy</li> <li>➤ Presenting creative diplomatic initiatives</li> </ul>
	Intelligence and Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Front-line presence for gathering and completing intelligence</li> <li>➤ Utilizing intelligence for various objectives</li> <li>➤ Maintaining multiple intelligence sources</li> <li>➤ Cross-referencing intelligence from different sources and levels</li> <li>➤ Collection, identification, and analysis of enemy organization</li> <li>➤ Risk-taking based on intelligence dominance</li> <li>➤ Emphasis on protecting personnel's lives and dignity</li> <li>➤ Severe response to espionage</li> <li>➤ Emphasis on developing self-protection</li> <li>➤ Committed to deepening and customizing protection measures</li> </ul>

## Conclusion and Suggestions

### Conclusion

Without doubt, one of the crucial factors in organizational success is command and leadership. Martyr Soleimani, who was nurtured in the school of Imam Khomeini (may Allah be pleased with him) and the Supreme Leader (may his shadow be prolonged), and whose personality was shaped through his presence as a commander from the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, achieved remarkable success with his command and leadership style in fighting terrorist and takfiri forces in the region, especially ISIS in Iraq. He secured major victories for the resistance axis and the Islamic Republic of Iran, largely due to his distinctive command style. Finally, the ultimate model of jihadi command and leadership based on Martyr Soleimani's approach in fighting ISIS in Iraq is presented in its functional dimension.

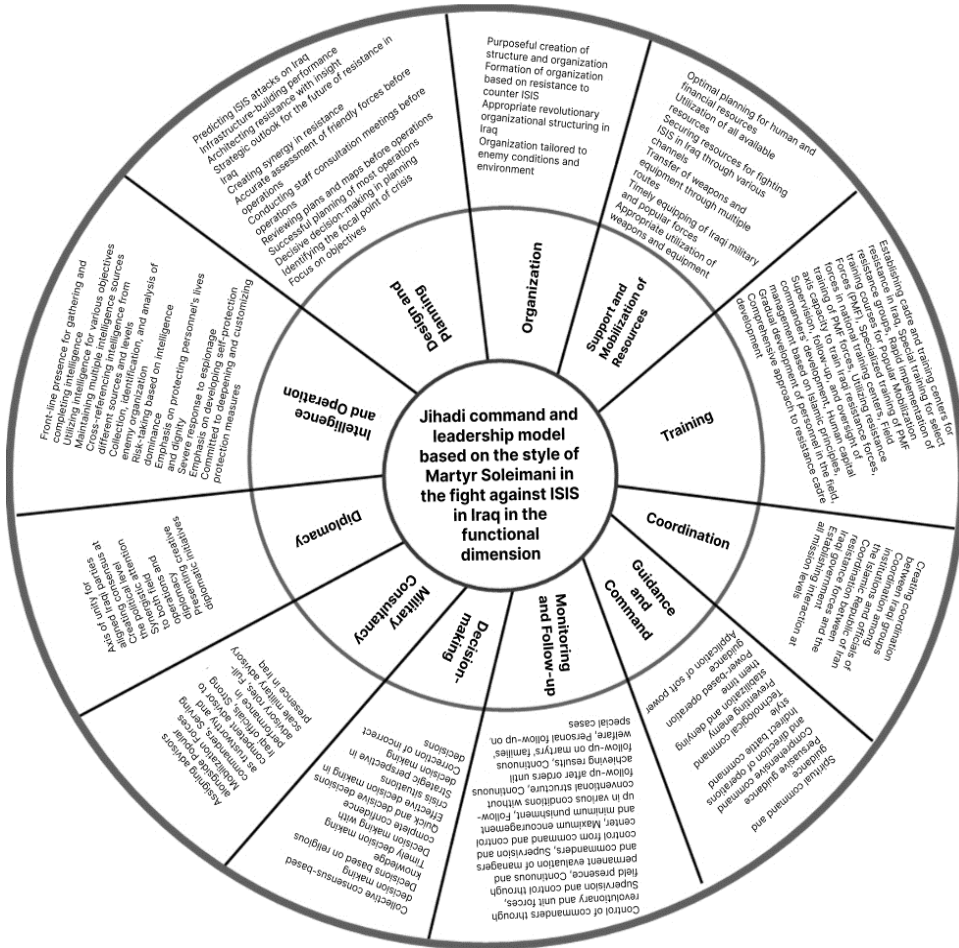


Figure 3: The Final Model of the Research

### Suggestions

Utilizing the research findings in educational texts related to command and management at universities and military training centers.

Planning and implementing training courses and workshops about Martyr Soleimani's command and leadership style in the resistance axis.

Creating opportunities for theorizing about command style in the resistance axis by comparing and analyzing this research with other credible studies regarding the leadership styles of the Revolution's Imams and resistance axis commanders.

Organizing scientific meetings and conferences regarding Martyr Soleimani's command style in the resistance axis.

## References

### Persian References

1. Ahangar, M.R., & Tolaei, R. (2020). **Martyr Soleimani School: A Model for Training Civilization-Building Jihadi Managers**. Imam Hussein University.
2. Armed Forces Disciplinary Regulations (1990). **Approved by Supreme Command**.
3. Mousavi, S.A., Shams-Dolatabadi, S.M.R., & Ahadi, M. (2016). **Presenting Command and Management Model in Armed Forces**. Supreme National Defense University.
4. Abolhasani, M.M. (2022). Interview with Martyr Soleimani's Comrade. Tehran.
5. Babaei Talatapeh, M.B. (2020). **Strategic Defense Studies Quarterly**, 18(82).
6. Abolhasani, K., Beik-Bilandi, A.A., & Roshani, R. (2019). **Strategic Defense Studies Quarterly**, 17(77).
7. Bakhtiari, L. (2019). **Value-Based Managers Development Model**. Supreme National Defense University.
8. Chizari, M. (2022). Interview with Operations and Training Officer.
9. Rezaeian, A. (2004). **Fundamentals of Organizational Behavior Management**. SAMT.
10. Keikhaei Rad, H. (2016). **ISIS: The Anti-Islamic State**. Tehran: Namavarani Mandegar.
11. Langari, A., Solgi, M., Mortezaataba, H., Islamjoo, A., & Shirmardi, H. (2020). **Second International Conference on Islamic Revolution's Second Step**, Martyr Soleimani School. Imam Hussein University, 2, 1-29.
12. Group of Authors: Tabatabai Yazdi, S.A., et al. (2015). **Foundations of Wise Style**. Tehran: Baqir al-Uloom Center.
13. Motahari, M. (2009). **A Journey Through Prophetic Conduct**. Tehran: Sadra Publications, 49th Edition.
14. NAJA Operations Deputy (2018). **Atlas of Popular Mobilization Forces Operations Against ISIS in Iraq**.

15. Nikmanesh, R., & Javidi, E. (2020). Fighting ISIS in Iraq. Andishesazan-e Noor Studies Publications.
16. Hazaveh, A. (2014). **Dimensions and Components of Jihadi Management Based on Supreme Leader's Guidelines**. Tehran: Noora Publications.
17. Gharabaghi, M., & Azgoli, M. (2020). **Analysis of Martyr Commander Haj Qasem Soleimani's Leadership Style: A Transcendent Model of Servant Leadership**. Islamic Management Scientific Journal, 28(4), 113.

### English References

1. Checkland, Peter (1989). **Tsystems, thinking systems practice**. London: John Wiley & Sons.

### Websites

[www. Khamenei.ir](http://www.Khamenei.ir)